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FROM HAGIOGRAPHY
TO MARTYROLOGY:
CONFLICTING
TESTIMONIES TO A
SUFİ MARTYR OF THE
DELHI SULTANATE

Martyrdom is the final resort of the weak against the powerful. It is an act of truth performed without regard for one's life. As Cardinal Danielou observed, "Martyrdom is . . . the archetypal form of conflict with evil, the summit of Christian sanctity through conformation to Christ, and . . . the official proclamation of the Gospel to the accredited representatives of the earthly city."¹ The Islamic world has also had martyrs who resisted tyranny and injustice at any cost, from Muhammad's grandson Husayn to the self-sacrificing warriors who sought paradise through battle. Just as the Christian world created a formidable literature on martyrdom, so too there are traditions of Islamic martyrology. Important insights into the nature and development of this mode of sacred biography can be gained by analyzing the total literary tradition that has grown up around a martyr, in century on century of religious reflection. The case of Mas'ud Bakk, a Sufi

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¹ Jean Daniélou, *The Lord of History: Reflections on the Inner Meaning of History*, trans. Nigel Abercrombie (Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1958), p. 13.

mystic put to death in India in the late fourteenth century by Firuz Shah Tughluq, is a striking example of the growth of a martyrology. Sufi biographers initially avoided any reference to the execution of this man and presented instead Mas'ud's most admirable qualities to form a portrait consistent with the normative paradigms of moderate Sufism. Later hagiographers gradually inserted references to Mas'ud's martyrdom into his biography, until eventually his trial and execution became the subject of a dramatic martyrology. The transformation of Mas'ud Bakk's biography was strongly influenced by the model of al-Husayn ibn Mansur al-Hallaj (d. 922), the early Sufi martyr of Baghdad; Hallaj, with his ecstatic utterances, had become a symbol of the intoxicated saint and martyr, in contrast to the standard Islamic hagiographic paradigm, based on adherence to legal and ethical norms. The way in which the hagiographies gradually accepted the image of the martyr reveals a tension between paradigms in the Sufi biographical tradition and, incidentally, contrasts with the historical interests of the court and legal circles; it demonstrates, in addition, the extraordinary influence of the model of Hallaj on Sufi martyrology.

HAGIOGRAPHY AND MARTYROLOGY IN ISLAMIC HISTORIOGRAPHY

In attempting to describe the different modes of biography in Islamic historiography, it will be helpful to adopt some of the genre categories that have been so well developed by the Bollandists and their successors in the study of the biographies of Christian saints and martyrs.² The *vita* or hagiography is the record of an exemplary life, held up as a model for the imitation of the faithful. The *passio* or martyrology, on the other hand, is the dramatic account of conflict with secular authorities, resulting in persecution, trial, and death; this death is not a defeat, however, but a testimony to indestructible faith in God and often brings about the downfall of the martyr's persecutors. Both types of Christian biography are in some sense imitations of the life of Jesus, but with different emphases; the hagiography stresses attaining the highest degree of virtue, while the martyrology focuses on the direct opposition between good and evil. Christian martyrology is historically the predecessor of hagiography and ultimately derives from the liturgies

² Rene Aigrain, *L'Hagiographie: Ses sources, ses methodes, son histoire* (Paris: Bloud & Gay, 1953); Hippolyte Delehaye, *The Legends of the Saints*, trans. Donald Attwater (New York: Fordham University Press, 1962), and *Les Passions des martyrs et les genres littéraires* (Brussels: Société des Bollandistes, 1921); Peter Brown, *The Cult of the Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980); Charles F. Altmann, "Two Types of Opposition and the Structure of Latin Saints' Lives," *Medievalia et Humanistica*, n.s., no. 6, *Medieval Hagiography and Romance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), pp. 1-11.

associated with the feasts of the martyrs and the stories that were to be read out (*legenda*) on those occasions. It was only after the Christianization of the Roman Empire that hagiography began to evolve into a separate genre, as a suitable model for imitation in a Christian society.

The various forms of Islamic biographical literature are also essentially paradigmatic, and their roots, naturally enough, are to be found in the study of the life of the Prophet Muhammad. The life of the Prophet or *Sira* by Ibn Ishaq (d. 768) is the earliest surviving example of this genre. Its construction includes various elements of biblical legend, Arab oral epic, and accounts of the military actions (*maghazi*) of the Prophet, but the most distinctive aspect of the *Sira* is its reliance on *hadith*, the oral reports of the sayings and deeds of the Prophet.³ Since the Prophet's life was exemplary, *hadith* took on a paradigmatic aspect from the very beginning. Other biographical writings were conceived of as ancillary to the life of Muhammad. The first biographical dictionary arranged by "classes" or generations (*tabaqat*) was Ibn Sa'd's (d. 844–45) work on the companions of the Prophet; this compilation was oriented toward the study of these men as transmitters of *hadith*.⁴

The function of Islamic biographical literature is thus essentially paradigmatic; its basic unit of evidence, the *hadith*, was the source for the *sunna* or Prophetic example, which all the faithful were called on to imitate. Thus the *hadith*-based Prophetic biography, as well as its supplements, was designed to serve as the basis for legal and ethical norms. Works devoted to the lives of jurists and religious scholars demonstrated the continuous history of the custodians of revelation and served to ensure the transmission of religious norms. At the same time, secular dynastic history grew parallel with religious tradition, usually presenting historical events to serve as warnings for moral edification (and, incidentally, to flatter royal patrons). Secular annals differed from the oral method of *hadith* by employing written documents to produce continuous narrative, in imitation of the Iranian and Hellenistic dynastic chroniclers. Nonetheless, even universal histories,

³ W. Montgomery Watt, "The Materials Used by Ibn Ishaq," in *Historians of the Middle East*, ed. Bernard Lewis and P. M. Holt, Historical Writing on the Peoples of Asia (London: Oxford University Press, 1962); this whole volume is of great value for the study of Islamic historiography. Ibn Ishaq's work, as edited by Ibn Hisham (d. 834), has been translated by Alfred Guillaume, *The Life of Muhammad* (1955; reprint, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1974). Compare also G. Levi della Vida, "Sira," in *Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam*, ed. H. A. R. Gibb and J. H. Kramers (Leiden: E. J. Brill; London: Luzac & Co., 1961), pp. 547–49.

⁴ Hamilton A. R. Gibb, "Ta'rikh," *The Encyclopaedia of Islam, Supplement* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1938), pp. 233–45.

like the great *History of the Prophets and Kings* by al-Tabari (d. 923), were still considered as adjuncts to the study of Qur'an and *hadith*. The biographical mode continued to dominate local histories, also, so that the massive *History of Baghdad* by al-Khatib al-Baghdadi (d. 1071) is basically a long series of biographies of both secular and religious figures.⁵

From the very beginning, Sufi biographical writing was strongly focused on the Prophetic paradigm and the *hadith* methodology. The earliest known Arabic hagiography was the *Classes of the Sufis* of 'Abd al-Rahman al-Sulami (d. 1021), which contains 999 biographies arranged by generations (as in Ibn Sa'd's work mentioned above). The dependence of this work on the *hadith* methodology is striking. Most of the entries begin with a *hadith* of the Prophet transmitted by the Sufi in question, followed by a series of the Sufi's own mystical sayings.⁶ Sulami's objective was not narrative biography but the illumination of each saint's "words, character, and life-story, as a guide to his path [*tariqa*], his inner state, and his knowledge."⁷ This was followed by the encyclopedic *Ornament of the Saints* of Abu Nu'aym al-Isfahani (d. 1038), in ten volumes, which contained an important narrative element to fill out the doctrinal picture.⁸ At this early stage, however, narrative was clearly subordinate to the essential spiritual message. It was only with such master storytellers as the Persian Farid al-Din 'Attar (d. ca. 1220) and the Egyptian al-Yafi'i (d. 1367) that story began to take precedence over doctrinal paradigm, so that we find the luxurious florescence of a truly legendary corpus of hagiography.⁹ In

⁵ An excellent guide to Islamic historiographical sources is Jean Sauvaget's *Introduction to the History of the Muslim East: A Bibliographical Guide*, based on the 2d ed. as recast by Claude Cahen (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1965), chap. 3, "Narrative Sources."

⁶ For Sufi reliance on the Prophetic example, see Tor Andrae, *Die Person Muhammads in Lehre und Glauben seiner Gemeinde*, Archives d'Etudes Orientales, vol. 16 (Stockholm: Kungl. Boktryckeriet, P. A. Norstedt & Soner, 1918), esp. pp. 213–28; Earle Waugh, "Following the Beloved: Muhammad as Model in the Sufi Tradition," in *The Biographical Process: Studies in the History and Psychology of Religion*, ed. Frank E. Reynolds and Donald Capps, Religion and Reason 11 (The Hague: Mouton Publishers, 1976).

⁷ Abu 'Abd al-Rahman Muhammad b. al-Husain b. Muhammad b. Musa al-Sulami, *Kitab Taqat al-Sufiyya* [sic], ed. Johannes Pedersen (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1960), p. 5.

⁸ Raif Georges Khoury, "Importance et authenticité des textes de *Hilyat al-awliya'* wa-*taqat al-asfiya'* d'Abu Nu'aym al-Isbahani (336–430/948–1038)," *Studia Islamica* 46 (1976): 73–113.

⁹ Farid al-Din 'Attar, *Muslim Saints and Mystics: Episodes from the Tadhkirat Auliya'* [Memorial of the saints], trans. A. J. Arberry, Persian Heritage Series, no. 1 (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1966); Hellmut Ritter, *Das Meer der Seele: Mensch, Gott, und Welt in den Geschichten des Fariduddin 'Attar* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1955). V. Vacca traces some comparisons between Yafi'i's writings and Christian saints' lives

both Persian and Arabic, the Sufi hagiography continued in the paradigmatic mode while also incorporating important narrative elements.¹⁰

Typical of the best Indian Sufi hagiographies is 'Abd al-Haqq Muhaddith Dihlawi's *Tales of the Great Ones*, completed in 1591. Its paradigmatic focus on the Prophetic model is made clear in the author's introduction. He says that since sainthood is a continuation of the Prophetic mission, it is, by this analogy, great beyond all estimation. Thus the best form of devotion is keeping the company of the saints, or else hearing about the deeds of the saintly, because this will bring about great spiritual concentration (*himmat*) and many other blessings.¹¹ 'Abd al-Haqq strenuously applied the methods of *hadith* study to both written and oral sources and says that his work is based on "trustworthy transmitters regarding whose truthfulness there is a clear preference, but it is especially concerned with using the type of close scrutiny, accrediting, testing, and proving, required of the efforts of writers of history and auditors of *hadith* reports; it is written down just as it was heard."¹² One strength of a hagiography such as *Tales of the Great Ones* is that it is likely to mirror contemporary traditions without adding the author's own conceits and inventions, although selectivity and, occasionally, suppression of controversial material occurred in these works.¹³ The inferior works suffer more or less from padding with ornate and inflated prose style and are less critical of miracle stories.

The concept of martyrdom occurs very early in the Islamic tradition and gave rise to several different kinds of martyrology. Originally, the Arabic term *shahid* was used in the Qu'ran to mean "witness," one who *sees* as well as one who *testifies*. Among the early Muslims there were several who suffered persecution or death for their faith.¹⁴ Many

in "Piccoli appunti di agiografia araba," in *A Francesco Gabrieli* (Rome: Dott. Giovanni Bardi, 1964). A number of the Islamic stories have clear precedents in the religious fiction of Hellenistic Christianity.

¹⁰ The vast Persian hagiographical literature is described in C. A. Storey's *Persian Literature: A Bio-bibliographical Survey*, 2 vols. (London: Luzac & Co., 1927–71), 1:923–1067; cf. Annemarie Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1975), pp. 85ff.

¹¹ 'Abd al-Haqq Muhaddith Dihlawi al-Bukhari, *Akhbar al-Akhyar fi Asrar al-Abrar*, ed. Muhammad 'Abd al-Ahad (Delhi: Matba'-i Muja'ib, 1332), pp. 5–7; cf. the similar introduction by 'Attar, trans. Arberry, pp. 11–12, which stresses the "words" of the saints, though the narrative element is dominant throughout the text.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 8. For 'Abd al-Haqq's impressive *hadith* scholarship, see Khaliq Ahmad Nizami, *Hayat-i Shaykh 'Abd al-Haqq Muhaddith Dihlawi*, Silsila-i Nadwat al-Musanifin, 54 (Delhi: Nadwat al-Musanifin, 1953), pp. 164–76, 198–205, 283–86.

¹³ For an example of such selectivity, see Fedwa Malti Douglas, "Controversy and Its Effects in the Biographical Tradition of al-Khatib al-Baghdadi," *Studia Islamica* 46 (1976): 115–32.

¹⁴ A. J. J. Mosinck, "Khubaib," *Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam*, p. 257.

of these would be remembered as *ghazis* or holy warriors who died in God's cause. But it was above all among the Shi'is that a sense of martyrdom arose, in the wake of the undeniably severe persecutions inflicted on the imams descended from the Prophet. The beginnings of a martyrological literature on the "killing" (*maqtal*) of the imam can be traced to such origins.¹⁵ Later on, however, even in Sunni Islam, the concept of martyrdom became generalized enough to make a "martyr" of anyone who died for the faith, whether in battle with the infidels or while engaged in pious and holy deeds.¹⁶ Shi'ism even developed an elaborate lamentation poetry and popular passion plays for use in the emotionally charged Muharram celebrations, in memory of the martyrdom of Husayn. This contrasts with the Christian martyrs' liturgies, which were initially the central literary form and only later developed into paradigmatic hagiography. Islamic historiography reverses the relationship between *passio* and *vita*. The Islamic martyrologies are later and derive their authority from the norms established by the Prophet and the imams.

For Sufis, it was above all Hallaj who served as the model of the martyr. Hallaj actively courted martyrdom at the hands of his fellow Muslims. He cried, "Kill me, my trustworthy friends, for in my killing is my life."¹⁷ The French scholar Louis Massignon devoted over fifty years to the study of Hallaj, "the mystical martyr of Islam," as he subtitled his great monograph *La Passion de Husayn ibn Mansur Hallaj*.¹⁸ In a review of the first edition of Massignon's book, Hans Heinrich Schäfer concluded: "He [Hallaj] is the martyr of Islam, for he took the final and unalloyed consequence of the most deeply embedded tendencies in the Islamic religion toward personal appropriation and confirmation of the divine manifestation, the consequence of perfect loving surrender to the unity of the divine being—not in order to win holiness in secret, for oneself alone, but to preach it, to

¹⁵ James A. Bellamy, "Sources of Ibn Abi-'l-Dunya's *Kitab Maqtal Amir al-Mu'minin 'Ali*," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 104 (1984): 3–19; stories of the martyrdom of Husayn are summarized by Mahmoud Ayoub, *Redemptive Suffering in Islam: A Study of the Devotional Aspects of 'Ashura' in Twelver Shi'ism*, Religion and Society 10 (The Hague: Mouton Publishers, 1978), esp. pp. 93–139.

¹⁶ W. Bjorkman, "Shahid," *Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam*, pp. 515–16; M. J. Kister, "The 'Kitab al-Mihan,' a Book on Muslim Martyrology," *Journal of Semitic Studies* 20 (1975): 210–18.

¹⁷ Husayn ibn Mansur Hallaj [sic], *Akhbar al-Hallaj, Recueil d'oraisons et exhortations du martyr mystique de l'Islam Husayn ibn Mansur Hallaj*, ed. and trans. Louis Massignon and Paul Kraus, 3d ed. (Paris: Librairie philosophique J. Vrin, 1957), no. 50.

¹⁸ Louis Massignon, *La Passion de Husayn Ibn Mansur Hallaj, martyr mystique de l'Islam exécuté à Bagdad le 26 mars 922: Etude d'histoire religieuse*, 4 vols., new ed. (Paris: Gallimard, 1975); *The Passion of al-Hallaj, and Martyr of Islam*, trans. Herbert W. Mason, 4 vols. (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1982).

live in it, and to die for it."¹⁹ In the second volume of the *Passion*, Massignon has charted out the main lines of the amazingly wide influence of the name and example of Hallaj in the Islamic world. Among the many whom Hallaj influenced are a significant number of Sufis who were put to death by local authorities. In their understanding, and to many of their contemporaries, the example of Hallaj was never far away.²⁰ His life established a pattern of proclamation of mystical union by the phrase *ana al-haqq* (I am the Truth), instruction of disciples and ecstatic preaching in public, and seeking death before the law as a sacrifice to the divine beloved.

Sufi martyrology was, however, a controversial subject. Hallaj's eccentric behavior and audacity caused many leading Sufis to disown or ignore him, at least in public, for some time after his death. It was felt that lesser souls might construe Hallaj's internally directed spirituality as a license to escape the responsibilities of the external religious law; antinomianism and libertinism could be the unintended result of publicizing his example among the undisciplined masses. Yet it is likely that the Sufis cultivated their own form of martyrology in private, for we know of several no longer extant books on the persecution of the Sufis that circulated in the twelfth century.²¹ The public norms characteristic of hagiography were not always compatible with the explosive possibilities suggested by martyrology. The ethical and legal ideals of hagiography were bound up with a social system whose presuppositions were questioned by martyrs; thus many moderate Sufi writers attempted to avoid the conflict between *vita* and *passio* by simply not mentioning the execution of Hallaj or by quoting his writings anonymously.

Although Hallaj's spiritual state and cruel death earned him the respect of many moderate Sufis, nonetheless his position remained ambiguous. There was substantial support for the view that his execution was required because he had revealed the secret of divine lordship. As the Persian poet Hafiz put it, "That friend by whom the gibbet's peak was ennobled—his crime was this, that he made secrets

public."²² The eminent North Indian Sufi Sharaf al-Din Maneri (d. 1380) was of this opinion; he quoted with approval the view of the great Sufi theologian Abu Hamid al-Ghazali (d. 1111) that "the killing of him who has explained the divine unity is better than the resurrection of ten others."²³ Yet Maneri, like Ghazali, recognized the validity of Hallaj's spiritual attainments; the difficulty, they felt, lay in the probability of ordinary people's misinterpreting his example, and this problem was best avoided by not discussing the martyr's fate in public. It is easy to see how tension could arise between the models of normative hagiography and enthusiastic martyrology in the case of someone like Hallaj. The natural instinct of the traditional Islamic scholar, oriented toward the *hadith*-based Prophetic paradigm, would be to minimize the sensational and potentially revolutionary implications of martyrdom.

Nevertheless, India possessed at an early date an enthusiastic martyrology that was permeated with the Hallajian model. As Annemarie Schimmel has pointed out, the folklore and vernacular songs of north-west India are full of references to Mansur (Hallaj) and his fate.²⁴ Hallaj also occupied an important place in the high literary tradition of Persian writing in India. An eloquent example of this interest in Hallaj is furnished by Qadi Hamid al-Din Nagawri (d. 1244), a close companion of the Chishti leader Qutb al-Din Bakhtiyar Awshi (near whose tomb Mas'ud Bakk would be buried). In his *Treatise on Love*, he has given an impressive eulogy of Hallaj and *ana al-haqq*:

If you listen with the ear of the soul, every moment the cry of *ana al-haqq* is rising in all things; there is no cry in the world but this. Yet in the spiritual state of Mansur [Hallaj], when his tongue entered into speech, so much meaning was expressed, that when the saintly lord Husayn Mansur Hallaj—God's mercy on him—was torn to pieces and burned and his ashes thrown to the wind, nevertheless [his remains] voiced [?] and spread [?] this cry, and thus it became well known. But that cry was not from Mansur; "I am I, God" [*inni ana allah*, cf. Qur. 20:12] came forth from the bush, and the bush was not really there. What wonder, then, if it came forth from Mansur, and Mansur was not really there?²⁵

¹⁹ H. H. Schäfer, *Der Islam*, vol. 15 (1926), quoted by Annemarie Schimmel, *Al-Halladsch, Märtyrer der Gottesliebe* (Cologne: Jacob Hegner, 1968), p. 15; cf. Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*, pp. 62–77.

²⁰ These names include Hallaj's son Mansur, 'Ayn al-Qudat al-Hamadani in Iran, Shihab al-Din al-Suhrawardi al-Maqtul in Syria, Nesimi in Turkey, Ibn Sab'in in Andalusia, Sarmad in Mughul India, and others.

²¹ On the problem of persecution, see my *Words of Ecstasy in Sufism*, SUNY Series in Islamic Spirituality, 2 (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1984), esp. pt. 3.

²² Khwaja Shams al-Din Muhammad Hafiz Shirazi, *Diwan* (Tehran: Shirkat Offset, n.d.), p. 111, no. 142 (Qazwini ed.).

²³ Abu Hamid al-Ghazali, *Ihya' 'Ulum al-Din* (Cairo: Dar al-Shu'ab, n.d.), pt. 1, 61, quoted (with some typographical errors) in Sharaf al-Din Yahya Maneri, *Maktubat-i Jawahi* (Cawnpore: Newal Kishore, 1910), no. 15, pp. 21–22.

²⁴ Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*, p. 75.

²⁵ Qadi Hamid al-Din Nagawri, *Ishqiya*, MS 21/192 Farsiya, Habib Ganj Collection, Maulana Azad Library, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh, fol. 143b; cf. Nagawri's *Tawali' al-Shumus* MS 21/41 Farsiya, Habib Ganj Collection, Maulana Azad Library,

The Qadi's celebration of the martyrdom of Hallaj and the cosmic chanting of *ana al-haqq* is modeled precisely after the remarkable portrait of Hallaj given by Farid al-Din 'Attar, whose brilliant narrative ability has already been mentioned.²⁶ This passage is clear evidence that the theory of Hallaj's martyrdom developed by 'Attar was well known in Indian Sufi circles in the early thirteenth century.

The influence of the martyrdom of Hallaj on Indian Sufism reveals itself further in the writing of Sayyid Mir Mah of Bahraich, a Sufi who flourished during the reign of Firuz Shah. His account is especially interesting since Mir Mah lived near the tomb of the warrior-saint (*ghazi*) Salar Mas'ud in Bahraich, in an environment saturated with the symbolism of holy war and martyrdom.²⁷ He narrates that once a Hindu army raided Bahraich, killing several Sufis in the hospice and wounding Mir Mah himself. In setting the stage for describing this incident, Mir Mah has given a litany on the martyrdoms suffered by the prophets and saints, beginning with Adam; the sufferings of these holy ones began when God ("the Sultan of love") revealed Himself to them:

Adam the pure, on the day when the Sultan of love showed His face, was cast out of paradise and placed in the world as a stranger. . . . [Noah, Jonah, Abraham, etc. are described.] . . . The Prophet of God Muhammad, on the day when He [God] showed his face, migrated from Mecca to Medina; and likewise Husayn Mansur that time when they put him on the gibbet, and 'Ayn al-Qudat Hamadani that time when he was in the fire, alas, they burned him. And [so it was] that day the Sultan of love showed his face to the author of this book, in the region of Bahraich.²⁸

The importance of the Sufi martyrs can be gauged by the fact that this list includes ten major prophets and only two Sufis, Hallaj and 'Ayn al-Qudat ('Ayn al-Qudat Hamadani, d. 1131, was another famous Sufi martyr in the Hallajian tradition). The coupling of these

Aligarh Muslim University, fols. 10a, 63b-64a. For Nagawri's interest in Hallaj, see further Bruce B. Lawrence, "The *Lawa'ih* of Qadi Hamid al-Din Nagauri," *Indo-Iranica* 20 (1975): 34-53. I am grateful to Bruce Lawrence for sharing his insights with me on this subject.

²⁶ See 'Attar's *Muslim Saints and Mystics* (n. 9 above), pp. 264-71, on Hallaj. Compare further Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam* (n. 10 above), p. 74; Massignon, *Passion* 2:382-84.

²⁷ K. A. Nizami, "Ghazi Miyan," *Encyclopaedia of Islam* (1965), 2:1047-48. For the warrior-saints of India, see the suggestive remarks of Richard M. Eaton, *Sufis of Bijapur* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1977), pp. 22-37.

²⁸ Sayyid Mir Mah Bahraichi, *Risalat al-Matlub fi 'Ishq al-Mahbub*, in 'Abd al-Rahman Chishti, *Mir'at al-Asrar*, MS 676, H.L. 204A-B, Khudabakhsh Oriental Public Library, Patna, fols. 459b-460a; cf. Storey (n. 10 above), 1:1005.

two names points to 'Ayn al-Qudat as another major source from which Indian Sufis knew of Hallaj.²⁹ Mir Mah's ranking of the Sufi martyrs Hallaj and 'Ayn al-Qudat with the prophets, as exemplars for his own suffering, shows that he held them in very high respect indeed.

Alongside these enthusiastic admirers of Hallaj's martyrdom there were, to be sure, some cautionary voices among Indian Sufis. This more restrained attitude in public is evident in the advice of Husam al-Din Manikpuri (d. 1418), a Chishti in Bengal who maintained that Hallaj and 'Ayn al-Qudat were not good models for novices to follow.³⁰ In the same way, a Sufi attached to the court of Firuz Shah, Jalal al-Din Bukhari, said that Hallaj's execution was justified both externally as an affront to the religious law and internally as a deliberate self-sacrifice.³¹ Although the more ecstatic Sufis greatly and uncritically admired the example of Hallaj, others tempered their private approval of Hallaj with an ambivalence toward the concrete reenactment of the sacrifice of martyrdom. In the biographical tradition surrounding Mas'ud Bakk, a Sufi martyr who admired and quoted both Hallaj and 'Ayn al-Qudat, it will not be surprising to find a tension between hagiographical and martyrological modes of representation.

THE MAKING OF A MARTYR

Mas'ud Bakk³² was one of the most striking figures in early Indian Sufism. According to most accounts, he was born in the region of Bukhara in Transoxania, where he belonged to a princely house; later he migrated to India and is said to have been a close relative of the Sultan, Firuz Shah. It was probably during the chaotic last year of

²⁹ Compare Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*, pp. 295-96, 348; Nizami, *Some Aspects of Religion and Politics in India during the Thirteenth Century*, 1.A.D. Religio-Philosophy Series, no. 2, 2d ed. (Delhi: Idarah-i Adabiyat-i Delli, 1978), pp. 198, 273; Massignon, *Passion* (n. 18 above), 2:176-78; 4:67, no. 1116a.

³⁰ Husam al-Din Manikpuri, *Anis al-Ashiqin*, MS 29767 Farsiya Tasawwuf, Subhanullah Collection, Maulana Azad Library, Aligarh Muslim University, fols. 53b-54a.

³¹ Jalal al-Din Bukhari Makhdam-i Jahaniyan, *Khulasat al-Alfaz Bahr al-'Ulum*, MS 1209 Persian, Asiatic Society, Calcutta, fols. 71b-72a.

³² Bakk is said to be the name of a town in the vicinity of Bukhara, and although grammatically this should imply a surname of "Bakki," it is an acceptable archaism to write "Mas'ud Bakk," along the lines of "Ahmad Jam" (omitting the suffixed *-i* of *idafa* in spoken Persian). The alternative reading of Mas'ud's name is "Mas'ud Beg," "Beg" being a title among the Turkish nobility. There is no evidence, however, that this title was applied to Mas'ud, and his name is always made to rhyme (in *saj'*) with words ending in *-ak*. Metrically it must end in a double consonant since in the concluding poem of his *Diwan*, his name must be scanned as "Mas'ud Bakk-i Ahmad-i Mahmud Nakhshabi"; cf. A. Sprenger, *A Catalogue of the Arabic, Persian and Hindustani Manuscripts of the Libraries of the King of Oudh*, vol. 1, *Persian and Hindustani Poetry* (Calcutta: Baptist Mission Press, 1854), p. 486.

Firuz Shah's reign (1387) that Mas'ud was put to death.³³ Soon after his arrival in India, Mas'ud was attracted to the Chishti order, which, since its introduction in India at the end of the twelfth century, was well on its way toward becoming the most popular Sufi order in the subcontinent. Affiliation with the Chishtis would have been rather unusual for someone having connections with the court since the Chishtis were notable for their refusal to accept royal patronage and interference.³⁴ The contemporary documentation of Mas'ud's life is very sketchy, aside from his own literary works.³⁵ Mas'ud Bakk's writings were very popular among later generations of Indian Sufis, some of whom went to the extent of making talismans out of his writings, and his death anniversary was regularly observed along with those of other major saints.³⁶

³³ Bruce B. Lawrence, *Notes from a Distant Flute: The Extant Literature of Pre-Mughal Indian Sufism* (Tehran: Imperial Iranian Academy of Philosophy, 1978), pp. 47–49. It is hard to imagine the conditions for the execution of heretics in 800/1397, the more commonly mentioned date for Mas'ud's death. At that time there was no central authority in Delhi, only warring factions and a complete breakdown of order. It was this shambles of imperial Delhi that Timur sacked the following year. Compare Banarsi Prasad Saksena, "Firuz Shah Tughluq," and Mohammed Habib, "Successors of Firuz Shah Tughluq," in *The Delhi Sultanat (A.D. 1206–1526)*, ed. Mohammed Habib and Khaliq Ahmad Nizami, vol. 5 of *A Comprehensive History of India* (Delhi: People's Publishing House, Indian Historical Congress, 1970), pp. 618–19, 624–25.

³⁴ K. A. Nizami, "Chishtiyya," *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2:50–56.

³⁵ These include a collection of poetry, *Nur al-Yaqin*, which has been edited by Syed 'Abdul Shakoor Qadr, "Edition of Diwan-i Mas'ud Bek" (Ph.D. diss., Nagpur University, 1972); this edition has not been available to me. In addition, Mas'ud is the author of two speculative treatises: *Mir'at al-'Arifin*, ed. Abu Rija' Muhammad 'Abd al-Qadir (Hyderabad: Matba' al-Mufid, 1310/1892), and *Umm al-Saha'if fi 'Ayn al-Ma'arif*, MSS 202, 1444 Tasawwuf Farsi, Andhra Pradesh Oriental Manuscripts Library and Research Institute, Hyderabad. Since this article is concerned primarily with the biographical tradition, I am not going to discuss here the internal evidence from his writings for historical purposes. In a future study I plan to analyze both these treatises (*Umm al-Saha'if* is to be identified with the lost *Tamhidat* mentioned by 'Abd al-Haqq since its organization is closely modeled on 'Ayn al-Qudat's work of the same name). The letter purportedly written by Mas'ud Bakk to another Chishti Saint, Gisu Daraz (d. 1422), was probably written by the latter since it reflects the views of Gisu Daraz exactly. Compare Sayyid Muhammad al-Husayni Gisu Daraz, *Maktubat*, ed. Sayyid 'Ata' Husayn (Hyderabad, 1362), pp. 124–33; Syed Shah Khusró Hussaini, "Sayyid Muhammad al-Husayni-i Gisudiraz (721/1321–824/1422): On Sufism" (M.A. thesis, Institute of Islamic Studies, McGill University, 1976), pp. 69, n. 75; 85. The *Rawa'ih* or *'Ishq Nama* ("Fragrances" or "The Book of Love") attributed to Mas'ud Bakk (MS 276 Farsiya Tasawwuf, Maulana Azad Library, Aligarh Muslim University) is a sixteenth-century forgery; the *incipit* is copied verbatim from that of Mas'ud's authentic work, *Mir'at al-'Arifin*.

³⁶ Khalifa Khwishagi Chishti (Ghulam Mu' in al-Din 'Abd Allah), *Ma'arij al-Wilaya*, MS in personal collection of K. A. Nizami, Aligarh, p. 604; cf. Storey (n. 10 above), 1:1101; Muhammad Najib Qadiri Naguri, *Kitab al-A'ras* (Agra, 1300/1883), p. 206 (17 Muharram). I am much indebted to K. A. Nizami for his kindness in allowing me access to his magnificent collection and for his assistance with sources cited in this paper.

The first unambiguous historical reference to Mas'ud Bakk is in the biography of a Chishti saint of the next century, 'Abd al-Quddus Gangohi (1456–1537). Unexpectedly entering a Sufi hospice, he noticed another Sufi hastily conceal the *Diwan* of Mas'ud Bakk's poetry for fear that a jurist would see him reading it.³⁷ As it turned out, these fears were groundless, for 'Abd al-Quddus later became devoted to the work of Mas'ud Bakk and quoted his poetry frequently in his own writings.³⁸ Still, it is an interesting indication that, nearly a century after the death of Mas'ud Bakk, his works were controversial enough for someone to fear being caught reading them. At the same time, this incident is a sign of the strong appreciation of Mas'ud's writings in Sufi circles. Royal connoisseurs of poetry appreciated Mas'ud's verses, too; Sultan Sikandar Lodi (r. 1489–1517) had one of Mas'ud's poems inscribed in a royal tomb in Delhi in 1494, and the same poem was imitated by his Hindu court poet Brahman.³⁹

It was only in the Mughul period, however, that a complete biographical notice of Mas'ud Bakk appeared, in 'Abd al-Haqq's *Tales of the Great Ones*, and even this able author remained vague about the matter of Mas'ud's death. The fact that such a popular Sufi as Mas'ud Bakk was not included in biographical works until two centuries after his death (and even then with considerable delicacy) is further evidence for his controversial position until that time. Here is 'Abd al-Haqq's narrative:

Mas'ud Bakk was a relative of Sultan Firuz; his original name was Shir Khan. Once he wore the dress of the wealthy and the powerful, but suddenly one of the divine raptures overwhelmed him, and he entered into the service of the darvishes and the circle of their society. He became a disciple of Shaykh Rukn al-Din ibn Shaykh Shahab al-Din Imam. He was in the extremity of intoxication, one of those intoxicated with the wine of unity, who smash their glasses in the wine-house of reality. He spoke intoxicated words; no one in the Chishti order had ever revealed the secrets of reality so blatantly or acted so intoxicated as he. They say that his tears were so hot that if they fell on one's hand it would be burned. He wrote many works on the science of Sufism and unification. He had one work named *Tamhidat*, based on the *Tamhidat* of 'Ayn al-Qudat Hamadani; many subtle realities are

³⁷ 'Ijaz al-Haqq Quddusi, *Shaykh 'Abd al-Quddus Gangohi awr un ki Ta'limat* (Karachi: Academy of Educational Research, All Pakistan Educational Conference, 1961), pp. 179–80. This incident probably took place around 1475.

³⁸ Simon Digby, "'Abd al-Quddus Gangohi (1456–1537 A.D.): The Personality and Attitudes of a Medieval Indian Sufi," *Medieval India: A Miscellany* 3 (1975): 52.

³⁹ Ibid., p. 52, n. 228; Simon Digby, "The Tomb of Buhlul Lodi," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 38, no. 3 (1975): 560–61; 'Abd al-Qadir ibn Muluk Shah Bada'uni, *Muntakhab al-Tawarikh*, ed. Ahmad 'Ali (Calcutta: College Press, 1868), 1:323.

contained therein. And he has a *Diwan* of poems, odes and lyrics, and the remaining portion of his sayings are there. He has also written responses to most of the odes and poems of Amir Khusraw. Although in regard to some of the events of his spiritual path he was not noticed as a poet, some of his intoxicated poetical sayings have been in circulation. He has another work entitled *Mir'at al-'Arifin* [The mirror of the gnostics], for he says, "We became the archetype of the prophet Muhammad, since every heart is in the prophetic archetype" [i.e., the title alludes to Muhammad as the mirror in which the perfected mystics see themselves]. His grave is in the tomb of his master, near the place of Khwaja Qutb al-Din in Ladosarai [Mehrauli, south of Delhi]. He has gone to rest in the manner of an ascetic and a poor man [*mujarradana wa-gharibana khufta ast*].⁴⁰

The account begins with a typical conversion story, but there is a strong characterization of Mas'ud in terms of his predominant quality of intoxication, reinforced by the example of his burning tears; although ecstasy is frequently met with in the hagiographies, Mas'ud Bakk was quite unusual in this respect. The amount of his writings is also impressive and attests to his scholarship; he was in the first generation of Chishtis to engage in extensive literary production. 'Abd al-Haqq is not entirely eulogistic, though, since he discreetly observes that Mas'ud was not always a first-rate poet. The concluding sentence of the biography is rather tantalizing in its lack of detail, however; the precision of the rest of the account does not harmonize with such a banal generality. 'Abd al-Haqq's account is clearly a *vita*, emphasizing those qualities of Mas'ud's most suitable for imitation. Mas'ud's repentance from the court life was especially to be admired, in accord with the Chishtis' traditional repudiation of royal authority. But 'Abd al-Haqq reserved special praise for Mas'ud's treatise *The Mirror of the Gnostics*, from which he excerpted a full chapter; he regarded this as a praiseworthy mystical work precisely because it illustrated the universal qualities of the Prophet Muhammad.⁴¹

In spite of the skillful portrayal by 'Abd al-Haqq, the traditional *vita* of Mas'ud Bakk would soon turn into a martyr's *passio*. The gap in 'Abd al-Haqq's account was filled twenty-five years later by one of his favorite disciples, Muhammad Sadiq, in a hagiographical work

⁴⁰ 'Abd al-Haqq (n. 11 above), pp. 168–69. An almost identical but much more prolix account is given in the slightly later *Akhbar al-Asfiya* of 'Abd al-Samad ibn Afdal Muhammad ibn Yusuf Ansari, a nephew of the Mughul wazir Abu al-Fadl, writing in 1605, MS 668, Khudabakhsh Oriental Public Library, Patna, no. 57, fols. 51b–52a; cf. Storey (n. 10 above), 1:983.

⁴¹ Another famous *hadith* scholar, 'Ali al-Muttaqi (d. 1567), also praised Mas'ud Bakk's *Mir'at al-'Arifin*, in his *al-Jawahir al-Thamina*, MS 231 Tasawwuf Farsi, Andhra Pradesh Oriental Research Institute Library.

called *Words of the Sincere* (written in 1614). After quoting literally from his master's account, Sadiq went on to add the following: "In short, he was unique in his time in the sect of passion and love, and the religious scholars of the day were completely at odds with him; just as it is said, he went to his death by their juristic decision, like Husayn Mansur [al-Hallaj]." Sadiq here for the first time describes Mas'ud Bakk's death as a trial and execution. The only circumstantial detail in this report is a comparison with the fate of Hallaj, which is rendered vague by its anonymity of source. Sadiq amplified further on this in a later work devoted to the lives of poets, saints, and scholars of the generations after Timur, the *Classes of Shahjahan* (1636–37). After quoting again literally from the account in *Tales of the Great Ones*, Sadiq included the following appendix: "And they say that the religious scholars of the day hated him, as the saying goes, 'A man hates what he does not understand.' In the year 800 [1397], having approved a juristic decision for his execution, they hung him from the gibbet, just like Husayn Mansur [al-Hallaj]—may God be pleased with them both! After he died they burned him."⁴² This version adds two features also found in the story of the martyrdom of Hallaj (gibbet, burning of the body), but adds further to the vagueness by using a proverb to explain the persecution of Mas'ud. For some reason 'Abd al-Haqq chose to avoid discussing the circumstances of Mas'ud Bakk's death, but he must have been aware of these two accounts, written during his own lifetime by one of his disciples. Evidently the public had come to identify Mas'ud Bakk as an archetypal Hallajian martyr, and it was this controversial reputation that caused Indian Sufis to speak of him in a gingerly fashion. Sadiq, however, has transformed his master's paradigmatic hagiography into a martyrology by linking Mas'ud's fate with that of Hallaj.

Later hagiographers paid 'Abd al-Haqq the tribute of quoting his biography of Mas'ud Bakk in full, but usually with a few atmospheric touches suggestive of martyrdom. In 1613, Muhammad Ghawthi in his *Rose Garden of the Pious* ~~described Mas'ud Bakk as a Turkish soldier from Iraq or Tabriz and mentioned nothing of his death. In the article devoted to Shah Bajan of Burhanpur, however, he called Mas'ud "the Mansur of the age," that is, a Hallajian martyr.~~⁴³

⁴² Muhammad Sadiq Hamadani, *Kalimat al-Sadiqin*, MS 671, H.L. 202, Khudabakhsh Oriental Public Library, Patna, fol. 60b (cf. Storey [n. 10 above], 1:985), and *Tabaqat-i Shahjahani*, MS 22/46/1 Farsiya, Maulana Azad Library, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh, p. 28 (cf. Storey, 1:1171).

⁴³ Muhammad Ghawthi, *Gulzar-i Abrar*, Urdu translation by Fadl Ahmad Jewari, *Ahdhar-i Abrar* (Lahore: Islamic Book Foundation, 1395), pp. 491–92, 214.

Mas'ud
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‘Abd Allah Khwishagi, in the *Ascensions of Sainthood* (1683), made an interesting and fortuitous slip in the entry devoted to Mas‘ud’s master Rukn al-Din. Although he elsewhere recorded Mas‘ud’s traditional epithet as being *maqbul Allah*, “he who is acceptable to God,” in this instance, by the addition of a single dot, he dubbed him *maqtul Allah*, “he who has been killed by God.” After this inspired mistake, it is also worth noticing how Khwishagi effortlessly managed to bring the name of Hallaj into conjunction with that of Mas‘ud by judicious quotation of Persian verses alluding to Hallaj’s martyrdom.⁴⁴ In 1712, the story of Mas‘ud Bakk’s execution was told once more by Muhammad Bulaq, again with the suggestive comparison to Hallaj.⁴⁵

It was not until the early nineteenth century, though, that a detailed narrative of the causes and circumstances of this execution was given. Sometime after 1815, Muhammad Gul Ahmadpuri, a Chishti master who maintained a large academy in the Punjab, dictated a supplement to an earlier hagiography, and in this he evidently included much oral tradition. Ahmadpuri’s account is as follows:

It is related by the late and revered “sustainer of the poor” [Muhammad ‘Aqil Chishti, d. 1814, the master of Ahmadpuri] that one day the revered Mas‘ud Bakk was carrying a pair of sandals for his master. A religious scholar met him on the road and asked, “Whose shoe have you lifted up [that is to say, on your head]?” He replied, “I have lifted up the shoe of God Most High.” The externalist religious scholars reached a unanimous decision; beneath the Firuzabad fort on the riverbank, they martyred that revered man. Having torn his blessed limbs to pieces, they cast him into the river. After the occurrence of this event, although the believers cast nets into the river’s water, they found no trace of him. After much doubt, they found him, all limbs united and re-formed into a body, in the private room of the revered Nizam al-Din Awliya² [d. 1325] in Kilokri [an old suburb of Delhi near the Jumna]. Raising him up from that place, they buried him in the tomb of his masters, near the station of Qutb al-Islam Bakhtiyar Awshi in Ladosarai.

When this news reached the revered master [Mas‘ud’s master Rukn al-Din], he asked the judge for what reason they had martyred him. The judge said, “He affirmed that God Most High has a foot.” The revered master said, “Attribution [to God] for the lowest of things is the secret of correct relationship²]. Had you asked him whether the shoe of God Most High was for the personal use of God Most High?”

He [Rukn al-Din] continued, saying, “‘To God belong all things in heaven and on earth’ [Qur. 2.284], so the shoe undoubtedly belongs to God Most

⁴⁴ Khwishagi (n. 36 above), p. 604.

⁴⁵ Muhammad Bulaq, *Rawdat al-Aqtab*, cited by K. A. Nizami, *Salatin-i Dihli ki Madhhab-i Rujhanat*, *Silsila-i Nadwat al-Musannifin-i Dihli*, 67 (Delhi: Nadwat-al-Musannifin, 1377/1958), p. 413. On Bulaq’s work, see Storey (n. 10 above), 1:1014.

High!” He said that the judge was unable to reply, so then the revered master was stirred and said, “You black-face!” At once the face of the judge became black, and he was ruined.⁴⁶

In modern times, at any rate, this has become the standard version of the story of Mas‘ud Bakk.⁴⁷

It is remarkable that it took four centuries for a fully detailed account of Mas‘ud Bakk’s trial and execution to emerge, yet there are reasons¹ to give credence to these late written versions. Mas‘ud’s excessive veneration for his master’s sandals could easily have triggered political repercussions, as can be seen from an incident that occurred several decades previously, involving Shaykh Fakhr al-Din Zarradi (d. 1347) and Sultan Muhammad ibn Tughluq (d. 1351). When the Sultan summoned the leading Sufis of Delhi to demand their support in preaching a holy war against the infidels of the south, the Chishti masters were uncooperative. He tried to intimidate one of Fakhr al-Din’s disciples, who was holding his master’s shoes under his arms as a servant would (the disciple had just stepped forward to intercept the Sultan’s gifts to Fakhr al-Din since he knew that Fakhr al-Din would refuse the gifts and thus arouse the wrath of the capricious king). When the Sultan questioned the disciple’s right to do this, the disciple stoutly replied, “To honour him I put his shoes on my head, so what is it to you that I keep them under my arm, and myself hold his robe and silver?” The Sultan, enraged, shouted, “Leave off these beliefs of infidelity [*i‘tiqad-ha-yi kufr-amiz*] or I will kill you!” The disciple replied that he would welcome such martyrdom for his master’s sake, and the Sultan, finding that his intimidation had failed, desisted.⁴⁸ Now obviously it was not just the veneration of

⁴⁶ Muhammad Gul Ahmadpuri, *Takmila-i Siyar al-Awliya²*, MS in personal collection of K. A. Nizami, Aligarh, fol. 18b. The sentence marked with a question mark I have read as follows: *kih idafat bara-yi adna sirr-i nisbat-i durust ast*. In the immediately following sentence I read *shuma pursida budid for shuma pursida bud*. For Ahmadpuri, see Storey (n. 10 above), 1:1037. Ten years earlier in Hyderabad, Ghulam ‘Ali Shah Musawi presented this story in nearly identical words, in a massive hagiography of Deccan Sufis entitled *Mishkat-i Nuhawwat*, MS 194 Tadhkira Farsi, Andhra Pradesh Government Oriental Manuscripts Library, Hyderabad, fol. 369b. Ahmadpuri’s work is more complete, though, and is presumably based on some as yet undiscovered hagiography known to Muhammad ‘Aqil.

⁴⁷ A. Rashid, *Society and Culture in Medieval India (1206–1556 A.D.)* (Calcutta: Firma K. L. Mukhopadhyay, 1969), p. 23, who gives no source. The same account was repeated to me by Rashid’s teacher, S. H. Askari of Patna University, in a conversation in Patna, July 1979. I am grateful to S. H. Askari for sharing his insights with me on this subject.

⁴⁸ Mir Khurd (Sayyid Muhammad ibn Mubarak ‘Alawi Kirmani), *Siyar al-Awliya² fi Mahabbat al-Haqq Jalla wa-‘Ala²* (1302/1885; reprint, Islamabad: Markaz-i Tahqiqat-i

the master's shoes that caused the Sultan to threaten punishment, but it did provide the excuse for him to accuse the disciple of religious unorthodoxy.

The real issue for the Sultan was his power and authority, and persecution and religiously based charges were invoked whenever they assisted his program.⁴⁹ Prostration on the ground, though contrary to generally accepted Islamic legal decisions, was customary in the court of Firuz Shah, where the wazir would touch his head on the ground three times before greeting the Sultan. Up to the time of Nasir al-Din Mahmud Chiragh-i Dihli (d. 1356), the Chishti Sufis had practiced full prostration before the master, but thereafter only kissing of the feet since prostration (as in the ritual prayer) is only lawful before God.⁵⁰ It is scarcely possible to overestimate the importance of such symbolic actions as prostration and reverence for shoes in medieval India. If a Sufi, such as Fakhr al-Din's disciple or Mas'ud Bakk, placed his master's sandals on his head, this in effect meant that the authority of the king, or of any other mortal, was of no consequence whatsoever. This was of course a terrible affront to the Sultan. If Mas'ud also uttered the ecstatic conclusion that his master was to him as God, that would only have furnished the king with an excuse to raise an appropriate theological accusation. It is understandable that the Sultan might have reacted violently against an independent and unorthodox Sufi, particularly one who (like Mas'ud Bakk?) was a member of the royal family and hence doubly a rival for authority.

In other words, although there is no way to confirm the very late account of Ahmadpuri, and although it may have been influenced by other stories, it is psychologically an absolutely accurate portrayal of

Farsi-i Iran wa-Pakistan; Lahore: Mu'assasa-i Intisharat-i Islami, 1398/1975), pp. 281–83; an abridged version is given by 'Abd al-Haqq, pp. 91–92. Mir Khurd states that he heard this directly from the disciple, Qutb al-Din Dabir.

⁴⁹ Muzaffar Shams Balkhi, a professor in one of Firuz Shah's colleges, commented on the Sultan's tendency to use the law to support his own whims, in his *Maktubat*, no. 163, trans. S. H. Askari, *Maktub Literature as a Source of Socio-political History: The Maktubat of a Sufi Firdausi Order of Bihar—a Case Study*, Khuda Bakhsh Annual Lecture Series, 6 (Patna: Mahboob Husain for Khuda Bakhsh Library, 1976), p. 20.

⁵⁰ Mahdi Husayn, *Tughluq Dynasty* (Calcutta: Thacker Spink & Co., 1963), p. 652; Nasir al-Din Chiragh-i Dihli, *Khayr al-Majalis*, comp. Hamid Qalandar, ed. Khaliq Ahmad Nizami, Publication of the Department of History, Muslim University, no. 5, Studies in Indo-Muslim Mysticism, 1 (Aligarh: Muslim University, Department of History, [1959]), p. 157; see "Introduction," p. 29, n. 5. I have seen only one instance of a contemporary legal text condemning this court practice, in Sharaf Muhammad al-'Attari, *Fawa'id-i Firuz Shahi*, MS JF 287 Fiqh, Maulana Azad Library, Aligarh Muslim University, fol. 249a. It would be interesting to know the Sultan's reaction to this work that he commissioned.

the relationship of the independent Sufi toward the authority of the king and the jurists. The judge's remark about God having a foot is also a typical literal minded misunderstanding. When Mas'ud said that he bore the sandals of God, he meant to glorify his master as one who had attained union with God, not to raise-bizarre-theological heresies-of-an-anthropomorphic-nature. Yet it is entirely believable that an unimaginative judge, thinking in terms of the old handbooks of heresy, could have supposed Mas'ud to have asserted that God has a foot (this would constitute the classical heresy of *tashbih* or assimilating God to a created being).⁵¹ In addition, the description of Mas'ud's body being torn to pieces by a mob seems quite plausible when compared with an incident that Firuz Shah recorded in his triumphal inscription in the Firuzabad mosque of old Delhi. A man claiming to be the awaited messiah or *mahdi* was declared an infidel by the jurists and torn limb from limb by a mob.⁵² Therefore one cannot rule out the possibility that, a few years later, Mas'ud Bakk was killed in a similar manner.

Mas'ud Bakk's biographical journey toward martyrology is not an isolated case in Indian Sufi hagiography; an even more remarkable example of martyrdom's attractive imagery can be seen in the case of two men best described as eccentrics, Ahmad Bihari and his associate 'Izz of Kako, two would-be Sufis of Bihar. The most eminent Sufis of the day, such as Gisu Daraz and the successors of Sharaf al-Din Maneri, regarded these men as insane or pathologically deluded.⁵³ They had publicly insulted the Prophet Muhammad, and the Sultan swiftly put them to death.⁵⁴ Yet because these two had been put to

⁵¹ An account of Firuz Shah's inquisition includes lengthy descriptions of standard heresies from the classical theological handbook, the *Tamhidat* of Abu Shakur al-Salimi (d. ca. 1077); cf. the anonymous *Sirat-i Firuz Shahi*, MS 167, Sarkar Collection, National Library, Calcutta, pp. 129–47 (this is a copy of MS 540, Khudabakhsh Oriental Public Library, Patna, fols. 63a–72b).

⁵² Firuz Shah Tughluq, *Futuhat-i Firuz Shahi*, ed. Shaikh Abdur Rashid (Aligarh: Muslim University, Department of History, 1954), pp. 7–8.

⁵³ Gisu Daraz, *Jawami' al-Kalim*, comp. Sayyid Muhammad Akbar Husayni (Hyderabad: Intizami Press, 1356/1937), pp. 157–58; Husayn Mu'izz Balkhi (d. 1440), *Ganj-i La Yakhfa*, MS H.L. 3979, Khudabakhsh Oriental Public Library, *majlis* 49, fol. 81b; Ahmad Langar Darya Balkhi (d. 1486), *Mu'nis al-Qulub*, pp. 134–35, cited by A. Rashid (n. 47 above), p. 42, n. 160.

⁵⁴ Firuz Shah Tughluq, p. 7. This passage has usually been interpreted to mean that Ahmad Bihari and his associate were "confined and punished with chains," so Sir H. M. Elliot, *The History of India as Told by Its Own Historians: The Muhammadan Period*, ed. John Dowson (Allahabad: Kitab Mahal Private, n.d.), 3:378. But the men were already in chains before the trial, so the phrase *hi-qayd-u-zanjir siyasad farmudim* must be interpreted in its historical sense: under Muhammad ibn Tughluq, *siyasat*, "punishment," had become a euphemism for execution; see Mahdi Husayn (n. 50 above), pp. 348–55; Nizami, *Salatin* (n. 45 above), p. 425.

death for bizarre religious opinions, uncritical biographers classified them as martyrs. An astonishing scenario unfolded in several Indian hagiographies, in which Sharaf al-Din Maneri cursed the city of Delhi because of Firuz Shah's impious persecution of these "saints," and the devastating invasion of Timur in 1398 was the divine punishment for the execution of these martyrs.⁵⁵ This story perfectly fulfills the requirements of the *passio*, with a trial, execution, and wreaking of divine vengeance on the tyrant. It also shows how certain characteristics came to be associated with martyrdom, such as giving expression to outrageous views in public. If, however, contemporary Sufis (and the Sultan!) were right in seeing these men as deranged pretenders, then in this instance the growth of a martyrology has been made possible by imagination alone through a story that flies in the face of known facts. Significantly, Gisu Daraz observed that Ahmad Bihari used to say things like the ecstatic sayings of Hallaj and 'Ayn al-Qudat, but the imitation seems to have been only superficial. In this instance, the same process of growth in martyrological legend has taken place, which makes it like the story of Mas'ud Bakk, but with a far less solid foundation.

Ahmadpuri's story of Mas'ud Bakk's death represents the triumph of martyrology over the standard hagiography of 'Abd al-Haqq's account. The miraculous restoration of Mas'ud's body is an eloquent testimony to his saintliness, especially since it was discovered in the room of Nizam al-Din Awliya², one of the most revered figures among the early Chishti masters. The miracle also serves as a reproof to the royal power that unjustly had him put to death with judicial approval. Just as in life Mas'ud had left royalty behind and sought the society of the saints, so in death his remains were cast from the Sultan's citadel and discovered in a ~~sacred place~~. It is perhaps not accidental that Mas'ud Bakk is not mentioned by any of the royal chroniclers of the Tughluq era or by any of the jurists who wrote numerous legal works under Firuz Shah's commission. Mas'ud had renounced the authority to which they were bound and thus removed himself from their purview. Even the later literary historians who mentioned Mas'ud's poetry avoided referring to his death.⁵⁶ The emergence of

⁵⁵ Shu'ayb Firdawsi, *Manaqib al-Asfiya*² (Calcutta: Nur al-Afaq, 1313/1895), pp. 129–30; 'Abd al-Rahman Chishti, *Mir'at al-Asrar* (n. 28 above), fol. 464a. This material is discussed by Paul Jackson, "The Life and Teaching of a Fourteenth-Century Sufi Saint of Bihar (Sharafuddin Ahmad Maneri)" (Ph.D. diss., Patna University, 1979), pp. 140–41; I would like to thank Paul Jackson for his valuable communications on this subject.

⁵⁶ Taqi Awhadi (ca. 1615), *'Arafat al-'Ashiqin*, MS 209 Tadhkira Farsi, Andhra Pradesh Government Oriental Manuscripts Library, Hyderabad, under the letter M.

this martyrological complex occurred at just the time when the royal authority of the Mughuls had irrevocably faded away.⁵⁷ The accommodations that medieval Sufis made with the throne were no longer necessary. Although the *hadith*-oriented Islamic establishment was still very much alive in the academies of Muslim learning, it did not hold a monopoly over the aspirations of Indian Muslims. Martyrology may have succeeded at this time because of its ability to appease the uncertainties of the post-Mughul period and to demonstrate the infallible power of the spirit over all opposition. Yet regardless of the reason for its success at this time, the portrayal of Mas'ud Bakk as a martyr still retains its appeal. Rather than solving a problem of history, it raises new questions, as do all martyrologies, about the authority of a secular power over independent spirituality, and it affirms the eternal worth of the martyr's sacrifice.

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fols. 378aff. (cf. Storey [n. 10 above], 1:810); Ilahi Hamadani (d. 1654), *Khazina-i Ganj-i Ilahi* (cited by Sprenger [n. 32 above], pp. 66–67, 84; I have not seen this, but according to Sprenger, it is partially based on Taqi Awhadi); Rida-Quli Hidayat, *Riyad al-'Arifin* (Tehran: Kitabkhana-i Mahdiya, 1316), pp. 221–22.

⁵⁷ I owe this observation to Richard Eaton of the University of Arizona, who kindly commented on an earlier draft of this article.